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TELL

The Post Cards of the 1939 National Exposition

by Richard T. Hall

Most Swiss collectors are familiar with the well-documented postal cards (Fig. 1) and letter cards (Fig. 2) issued for the 1939 National Exposition in Zürich, the "Landi". [See the "Postkarten" section of the Zumstein *Ganzsachen Schweiz* catalog, numbers P145 to P150 for the postal cards and the "Ausstellungbriefe" section, numbers AuB5 to AuB7 for the letter cards] Both these issues reproduce the 10c and/or 20c values from the second Landesausstellung set (Zumstein 228 to 239).

Figure 2. Landi letter card Zumstein No. AuB5-002

Figure 1. Postal card Zumstein No. P145-013

The postal cards were issued in two denominations, 10c and 20c, and in three languages, German, French, and Italian. In addition, there were 37 different scenes from the Exposition illustrated on these cards. And to add to the confusion, the 10c cards come in two shades of brown, gray brown and lilac brown. All these combinations give a total number of different postal cards available as 91, quite a collection all on its own! These postal cards are not expensive, with catalog values ranging from Fr 12.- for a mint German version of the 10c gray brown card to Fr 50.- for a cancelled Italian version of the 20c value.

The letter cards were only issued in one denomination, 20c, but again in three languages with 34 different scenes. But in this case, the collection of these letter cards only totals 34, the number of different scenes. These letter cards are also not expensive, with catalog values ranging from Fr 12.- for a mint German version to Fr 60.- for an Italian *(continued on page 14)*

The Post Cards of the 1939 National Exposition

(continued from page 1) version with a first day cancel.

But what many collectors may not be aware of is the existence of post cards from the Exposition. I happen to have four of these cards and have been trying to no avail to find out more about them. While the similar post cards issued for the 1914 Exposition in Bern are well documented in the beautiful work of Georges Schild and Hansjörg Fankhauser, *Landesausstellung 1914: Ganzsachen, Stempel, Ansichtskarten und Vignetten,* I have been unable to find a similar reference for the 1939 Exposition. [The German word for what we call post cards is *Ansichtskarten.* What we call postal cards is *Postkarten.*]

Figure 3. LA 1203 address side

Let's begin by illustrating the four cards I have found. First, I have two cards which obviously are part of a larger series. They are pretty watercolor paintings of locales on the exposition

Figure 5. LA 1205 address side

"Pavillon" cancellation used on the German versions of the 5c and 10c values of the 1939 Landesausstellung set. The 20c postage is correct as the card is addressed to the United States.

To gain a better understanding of these post cards and to enlist the aid of other collectors in documenting them, I decided to write this article. If you can help me, please write or send me an e-mail. My addresses are on the masthead page of this journal.

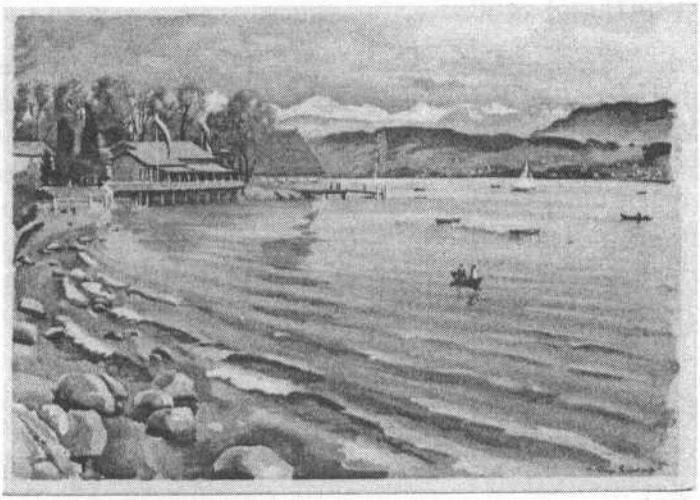

Figure 4. LA 1203 view side

grounds. Figures 3 (address side) and 4 (view side) show the *Fischerstube* (I assume this was a fish restaurant). Note the special exposition

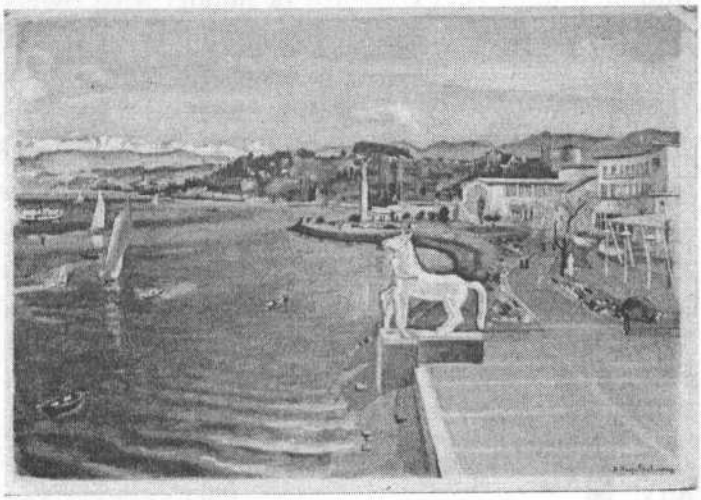

Figure 6. LA 1205 view side

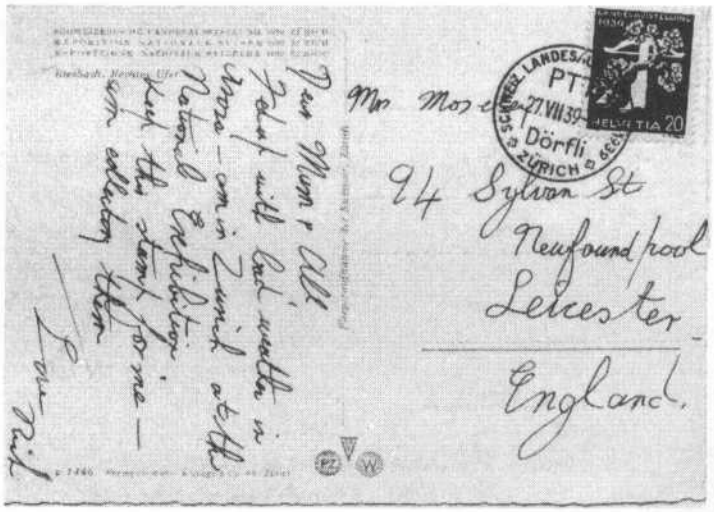

Figure 7. Card 1446 address side

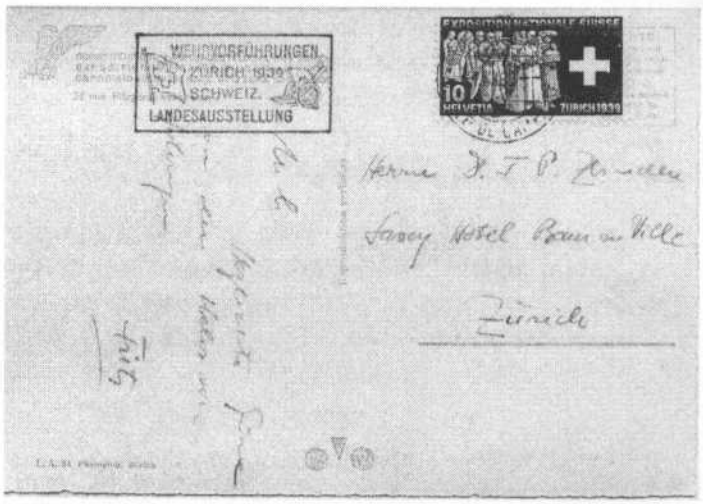

Figure 9. LA 91 address side

Figures 5 (address side) and 6 (view side) show a view from the Terrace restaurant of the Festplatz. Note that this card was not posted at the exposition. With the outbreak of World War II on 1 September 1939, the exposition closed for two weeks and then reopened to renewed attendance for its final six weeks, closing on 29 October. So our correspondents (there are 3 different handwritings on the card) must have visited the exposition during its final days, wrote the card on 1 November, and posted it after returning home to Thalwil. And even though Thalwil is in the German-speaking part of Switzerland, the stamp used is the French version of the 20c stamp. Again, the postage is correct as the card is addressed to Rome.

Figure 8. Card 1446 view side

Figures 7 (address side) and 8 (view side) show a glossy aerial photograph of the exposition grounds. Here we have another of the special exposition cancels used, this time the "Dörfli" version. And again, the postage is correct as the card is addressed to England.

The final card is very interesting for its subject and the associated cancellation. Figures 9 (address side) and 10 (view side) show this card, a glossy photograph of an anti-aircraft gun display at the exposition. The card has a deckled edge. The cancel is from Feldpost 27 and was used on 31 July, 1 August, 5 August, and 6 August. The special cancellation commemorates the military display at the exposition and shows a Swiss flag and a cannon. Given that war was to break out in a month, the winds of war must have prompted the Swiss to display their preparedness. Here we see the use of one of the stamps from the first Landesausstellung series (Zumstein 219 to 227). The postage is correct as the card is addressed to a hotel in Zürich.

Now let's look at some details of these cards which will explain why I think they have some sort of "official" status. If

Figure 10. LA 91 view side

Figure 11. Inscription 1

on the cards LA 1203 and 1205 (Figs. 3-6), Figure 12 card 1446 (Figs. 7-8), and Figure 13 card LA 91 (Figs. 9-10). Notice the similarity of wording, "Swiss National Exposition 1939 Zürich", in either 3 languages (German, French, and Italian) for Inscriptions 2 and 3, with the addition of Romansh for Inscription 1. Also note the wing and interlocked rings logo in Inscriptions 1 and 3 and the lack thereof in Inscription 2. Type faces are similar for Inscriptions 1 and 2 but different for Inscription 3. These inscriptions, particularly with the logo, certainly look "official".

you look at the upper left corner of the address side of each of these cards, you will see a similar inscription. Let me enlarge these so you can see better their similarities and differences. Figure 11 shows the inscription found

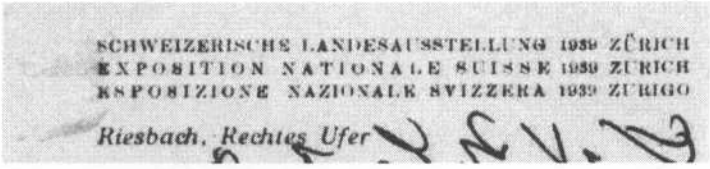

Figure 12. Inscription 2

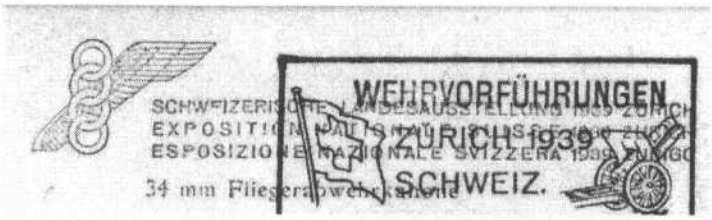

Figure 13. Inscription 3

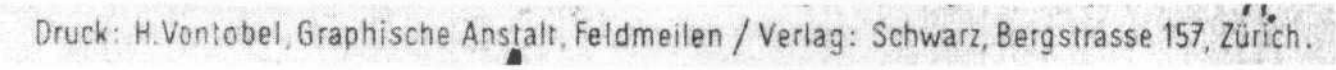

Figure 14. Printer's imprint 1

The two watercolor cards were almost certainly issued as parts of a series, given their coding "LA 1203" and "LA 1205" (LA probably stands for "LandesAusstellung"). I think it is safe to assume there were at least five cards in the series. Figure 14 shows the printer's imprint for these two cards. It may not reproduce well so I will repeat it: "Druck: H. Vontobel, Graphische Anstalt, Feldmeilen / Verlag: Schwarz, Bergstrasse 157, Zürich."

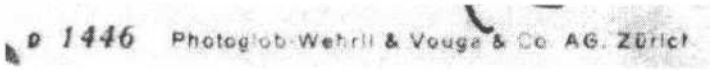

Figure 15. Printer's imprint 2

Figure 16. Printer's imprint 3

The two photographic cards were both printed by the same printer but the printer's imprints differ, see Figures 15 and 16 (card 1446 and LA 91, respectively). Again let me repeat them: "o 1446 Photoglob-Wehril & Vouge & Co. AG, Zürich" and "L.A. 91 Photoglob, Zürich". Whether or not these two cards are parts of series, they obviously are not from the same series. The military card has a series designation like the watercolor cards, "LA 91", which leads one to believe that there are more cards in the series. The other photographic card does not have the "LA" designation, nor does it have the wing and rings logo. However, it was cancelled in one of the post office stations within the exposition, lending credence to some sort of "official" status. These two photographic cards also have a set of three logos, the meaning of which is unknown to me. (see Figure 17)

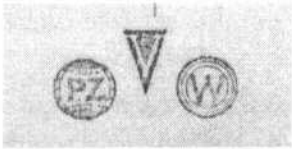

Figure 17. Logos

I hope I have convinced you that these post cards have some sort of "official" status. I also hope that I have whetted your interest enough to look through your collections to see if you have any similar items. I would greatly appreciate seeing what you have so that I can expand this meager catalog. And, if you would be interested in selling me any similar cards which you might have, I would be interested in purchasing them as I'm trying to put together an exhibit on the 1939 Exposition.

NEEDED: One 1938 Pro Aero flight cover with Z 26 stamp cancelled 22.V.38 at anyone of the 13 departure towns and having SION 31.V.38 as the arrival point cancellation. Send quotation and copy to Ernest L Bergman, 1421 Harris Street, State College, PA 16803 or by e-mail to elb3@psu.edu